

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 867

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

CINCPACREP CANBERRA

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, VN, AS

SUBJ: VISIT TO AUSTRALIA BY PRG AND NORTH VIETNAMESE DELEGATION

REF: CANBERRA 2351

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: VISIT TO AUSTRALIA OF VIETNAMESE COMMUNIST "PEACE" DELEGATION (REFTEL) HAS ELICITED ONLY MODERATE INTEREST IN AUSTRALIA. PRESS CONFERENCES HAVE PRODUCED STANDARD COMMUNIST ALLEGATIONS OF VIOLATIONS OF AGREEMENT AND PROTOCOLS. IN DEBATE IN PARLIAMENT MAY 3 PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM HAS REAFFIRMED GOA POLICY OF NON- RECOGNITION OF PRG. HIGHLY PARTISAN DEBATE IN SENATE MAY 2 PRODUCED APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION DENOUNCING SUPPORT FOR VISIT OF DR. J. F. CAIRNS, MINISTER FOR OVERSEAS TRADE AND SECONDARY INDUSTRY. END SUMMARY.

2. PRG AND NORTH VIETNAMESE "PEACE" DELEGATION CONTINUES ITS VISIT TO AUSTRALIA, BUT SO FAR HAS ATTRACTED LITTLE PUBLICITY DURING ITS APPEARANCES IN SYDNEY, BRISBANE, AND CANBERRA. INITIAL PRESS CONFERENCE IN SYDNEY AFTER ARRIVAL APR 26 COVERED BY CONSIDERABLE PART OF AUSTRALIAN PRESS, BUT NEWS ANGLE WAS PICTURE
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OF DR. J. F. CAIRNS, MINISTER FOR OVERSEAS TRADE AND SECONDARY

INDUSTRY, SITTING IN MIDST OF VIETNAMESE COMMUNISTS UNDER
LARGE PHOTO OF HO CHI MINH. CAIRNS HAS BEEN WIDELY REFERRED TO
IN PAST AS "HO CHI JIM", AND COINCIDENCE OF PHOTO WAS CLEARLY
TOO MUCH FOR PRESS TO RESIST.

3. AT PRESS CONFERENCE IN CANBERRA MAY 3 NGUYEN VAN TIEN,
MEMBER OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF NLF, SAID U. S. AND GVN WERE
SYSTEMATICALLY VIOLATING THE PARIS CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT, NOTING
RESUMPTION OF RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHTS OVER NVN AND SUSPENSION OF
MINE- CLEARING OPERATIONS. DELEGATION APPEARED AT AUSTRALIAN
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY , WHERE POSTERS, IN NLF COLORS, PROCLAIMED,
QTE THEY COME IN PEACE END QTE. DELEGATION WAS INVITED TO COCK-
TAILS AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE MAY 2 BY DR. CAIRNS, WITH SENATOR LIONEL
MURPHY, GOVERNMENT LEADER IN SENATE, IN ATTENDANCE. IN DEBATE
IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES MAY 3 PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM SAID
AUSTRALIA RECOGNIZED BOTH SOUTH AND NORTH VIET- NAM, AND PRG REPS
WERE ENTITLED TO COME TO AUSTRALIA ON NORTH VIETNAMESE PASSPORTS
(AS IN FACT THEY HAD). WHITLAM CONTINUED THAT ANYBODY WAS ENTITLED
TO SPEAK TO THEM WHILE THEY WERE HERE. HOWEVER, HE SAID THAT
THE GOA DID NOT RECOGNIZE THE PRG IN SOUTH VIET- NAM AND DID NOT
CONTEMPLATE RECOGNIZING IT.

4. VIETNAMESE COMMUNIST VISIT SPARKED HIGHLY PARTISAN
DEBATE IN SENATE MAY 2 WHICH COVERED NO NEW GROUND BUT WHICH
WAS OCCASION FOR SERIES OF NASTY EXCHANGES OF INTEMPERATE
LANGUAGE BETWEEN AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY AND DEMOCRATIC LABOR
PARTY SENATORS, IN WHICH ISSUES SUCH AS WHICH SENATORS HAD
SERVED IN THE FORCES DURING WORLD WAR II; WHAT HAPPENED DURING
THE BOMBING OF HANOI IN DECEMBER, 1972; AND THE HISTORY OF THE
ALP/ DLP SPLIT IN 1955 WERE TOUCHED ON WITH DREADFUL SKILL BY
THE PARTIES INVOLVED. ONLY NEW ITEM BROUGHT OUT IN DEBATE WAS
COMMENT BY SENATOR WHEELDON (LEFT WING OF ALP FROM WESTERN AUS-
TRALIA), QTE MY PRIVATE OPINION IS THAT WE SHOULD, AND AS FAR AS
I AM CONCERNED-- I SPEAK PERSONALLY AND ON BEHALF OF NOBODY
ELSE-- THE SOONER AUSTRALIA DOES RECOGNIZE THE PROVISIONAL
REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH VIETNAM, THE SOONER WE WILL
BE ACKNOWLEDGING THE REALITY AS IT EXISTS WITHIN SOUTH VIET-
NAM. END QTE.

5. FOCUS OF SENATE DEBATE WAS MOTION BY SENATOR HANNAN
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(LIBERAL, VICTORIA), CONDEMNING WELCOME AND SUPPORT FOR COMMUNIST
DELEGATION PROVIDED BY DR. CAIRNS. MOTION WAS PASSED ON
VOICE VOTE.

6. COMMENT: VIETNAMESE COMMUNIST VISIT HAS BEEN USEFUL, TO
EXTENT OF ELICITING FROM PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM STATEMENT THAT
GOA DOES NOT CONTEMPLATE RECOGNIZING PRG, THUS EXPLICITLY
ACCEPTING RECOMMENDATION OF DFA. DEBATE IN SENATE WAS UN-
EDIFYING, BUT ITS FUNCTION MAY HAVE BEEN TO SOLIDIFY LIBERAL-

COUNTRY PARTY- DLP COALITION IN SENATE WHICH MAY MAKE ITSELF
FELT ON VARIETY OF LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES OF LABOR GOVERNMENT
IN MONTHS TO COME.
RICE

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*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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